



# THE OBSERVER

WHITTIER AREA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Visit our website [www.whittieraudubon.org](http://www.whittieraudubon.org)

## ANNUAL CONSERVATION DINNER

Our annual Conservation Dinner will be Thursday night March 15 from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. This is in lieu of our monthly general meeting and will be at Hillcrest Congregational Church 2000 West Rd, La Habra Heights, CA 90631. Our 2018 Conservation Award Honoree is Andrea Gullo, Executive Director of the Habitat Authority. We will be serving dinner from Lascari's, accompanied by live music provided by our own Letty Brooks. Tickets are \$35 each and you can pay on our website with PayPal or with a check (see back page). Come out to support our educational outreach to local schools. *Jennifer Schmahl*

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## West Coast Marshes Are Drowning, But There's Still Time to Save Their Birds

*In the next 100 years, sea level rise will overtake Pacific coast marshes. Here's how conservationists plan to keep endangered marsh birds afloat.*

BY HANNAH WATERS AUDUBON.ORG

FEBRUARY 27, 2018

Karen Thorne has grown used to expressions of stunned shock whenever she gives a talk. It simply comes with the territory, the U.S. Geological Survey ecologist says, of informing hundreds of coastal wildlife managers that, in 100 years time, the places they care for will be underwater.

In her new study, the most detailed sea level rise projections yet for Pacific coast marshes, that apprehension melts away. [Published last week in \*Science Advances\*](#), the new work examines how rising waters will alter the ecology at 14 marshes, from Seattle in the north to Tijuana in the south, at 10-year intervals throughout the next century.

Like other reports on sea level rise, it predicts dire results by 2110, as rising waters inundate all coastal marshes in California and Oregon, and most of those in Washington. However, there's a silver lining: It also finds that sea level rise will progress slowly until 2050. That gives today's managers enough time to prepare marshes, and their birds, for the changes to come.

"It's breaking down this monster problem into something that's manageable," she says. "You actually have 40 to 50 years to see what we can do. It gives people hope and motivates them to figure this out."

At Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge near Los Angeles, managers have come up with an interesting solution to the problem. Like around San Francisco Bay, the land surrounding the refuge is urban and developed; not only does this prevent the marshes from moving inland as sea levels rise, but any rails that flee the floodwaters end up in the city, where they're readily caught by house cats and other predators. So, around 10 years ago, managers there built floating platforms and, during high tides, rails jump up onto them to stay dry. "It's a short term-strategy, but it's a great strategy," Thorne says, and one that could be easily replicated elsewhere.

These changes should help rail populations now, and over the next couple of decades. But additional restoration and management will be needed after that. "That's the reason we've taken so much time and money and partnered with Audubon to enhance this particular marsh," Marriott says. "We will have helped keep these guys alive in the initial stages of climate change and sea level rise." In a few decades, she'll pass off this work to the next cohort of refuge managers, who will use improved

climate models to get the birds over the next hump of adaptation.

This sort of work will be necessary to maintain marshes up and down California's coast, according to the new study. Even assuming that sea level rise is moderate (around three feet), by 2110 most California marshes will have no dry areas, or will convert entirely to mudflats. Under high sea level rise (nearly four feet), all California marshes and some in southern Oregon will be replaced by mudflats, and some in southern California will become open water permanently, with no tidal activity to speak of. Land managers now have a framework with which to work on mitigating future flooding.

## KIDS SPACE

Our annual fundraiser is coming up, the Conservation Award and Dinner. Proceeds fund our general meeting speaker program and placement of Audubon Adventures into classrooms and afterschool STEM programs. This past year, we funded placing a set of binoculars into one of these programs, and they have been a great hit with the kids. Would you like to sponsor AA in a classroom for \$40 or binoculars for \$100? We are looking for community partners to spread conservation education to our youth. We welcome your participation.



# Audubon

We are a chapter of National Audubon

**Mailing address:**

Whittier Area Audubon  
PO Box 548  
Whittier, CA 90608-0548

**Field Trip Schedule:**

Every second Saturday of the month  
(except July and August,)

**March 10, 2018 8:00am Sycamore Canyon Beginning Bird Walks**

Meet at the Sycamore Canyon Trailhead. The trail is located adjacent to Rose Hills Cemetery gate 17. DO NOT BE LATE. The gate opens and locks punctually. Expect to park on the street. Please check our website for updates.

Rain or recent rain cancels the Canyon walk, but we will choose another location) **Leader TBD.**

**Overnight trip to Taft Saturday March 17 to Sunday Mar 18. Carrizo Plain****Leader Jay Oberholtzer**

The Carrizo Plain is about 100 air miles north of Los Angeles near the communities of Taft and Maricopa. The area is officially known as the Carrizo Plain National Monument. It is home to Pronghorn Antelope, Tule Elk and, of great interest to us, many species of birds. Past trips have found Sandhill Cranes, Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons, Long-billed Curlew, Mountain Bluebirds, Loggerhead Shrikes and many others. The Carrizo Plain is also the best area in the State to view the effects of the San Andreas Fault. This trip is very dependent upon the amount of rainfall that occurs. The past years of drought followed by last year's deluge offer a mixed bag of possibilities

I will make a scouting run the weekend before to see the condition of the Plain. Depending on that result, we may re-direct our plans. Watch the website. Be sure to let me know that you are coming, preferably by email. That way I can be sure of letting you know of any changes.

We will be going up on Friday night (March 18) and spending Friday and Saturday nights in Taft. Saturday will be spent on the Plain. There will be a wine and cheese party Saturday night. We will check out Sunday morning and depart eastward to either the Tule Elk Reserve State Park or the Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area and head home on Interstate 5. Of course, you are free to depart whenever you need to. Be sure to bring your lunches for Saturday and Sunday and lots of water, a hat and sunscreen. Please arrange to car pool. The fewer cars the better while birding on the Plain. I have made arrangements to stay at the Holland Inn and Suites, 531 Warren Street, Taft.

661.763.5211. They probably will not have room for all of us, so you may have to stay at one of the other motels in town. We will meet at the parking lot of Holland Inn and Suites on Saturday morning, March 19, 2016 and leave at 7:00 a.m. If you are joining us, please let me know.

Jay Oberholtzer 562-945-2838 (office) or email at [vtulture@earthlink.net](mailto:vtulture@earthlink.net).

**FIELD TRIP REPORT**

February's field trip found our intrepid group boarding the Eagle Barge on Silverwood Lake. The weather was crisp and clear and perfect for birding. The barge tour allowed us to spot various groups of waterfowl, but no eagles. We did spot an Osprey towards the end of the water portion of the day.



Once back on land, we followed the shore around to the Inlet/Outtake towers (depends on if you're a lake person, or a water supplier). The

bird of the day was Lewis' Woodpecker. They were everywhere in the picnic areas and campgrounds. We also saw many Phainopepla, Scrub Jays, Red-breasted and -naped Sapsuckers, Oak Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, Wrentit, California Thrasher, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Fox Sparrow, a Great Blue Heron rookery with 8 herons. After a lunch break, we crossed back over 138 and birded the group campgrounds along the creek. There we lucked into a feeding flock that included Lawrence's Goldfinch and Western Bluebirds.

**Whittier Area Audubon Society  
2018 Conservation Dinner**

\_\_\_\_\_ will be attending

\_\_\_\_\_ tickets @ \$35 each

Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:

Whittier Area Audubon  
PO Box 548  
Whittier, CA 90608-0548